LOLETA RECREATION AREA, LOWER DAM
Allegheny National Forest
Six miles southeast of intersection
of State Highway 24041 and State
Route 66
Marienville Vicinity
Elk County
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-279-B

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Northeast Region
U. S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HAER
PA
24-LOL.
18-

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

LOLETA RECREATION AREA, LOWER DAM

HAER No. PA-279-B

Location: Allegheny National Forest
Six miles southeast of the intersection of
State Highway 24041 and State Route 66
Marienville Vicinity
Elk County
Pennsylvania

U.S.G.S. Marienville East Quadrangle
U.T.M. Coordinates:
17.660300.4584920

Builder: Civilian Conservation Corps

Date of Construction: 1933-1936

Present Owner: Allegheny National Forest

Present Use: Water dam over Millstone Creek.

Significance: Constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps between the years of 1933 and 1936. The CCC work project was initiated by President Roosevelt to put young men to work while at the same time assisting in the national conservation of the state and national forests and parks. The rustic style of engineering is unique to the CCC work project and is evident on the lower dam.

Project Information: This report was prepared by Archaeological Services Consultants, Inc. Architectural Historian Deborah L. Dobson-Brown, M.S. for the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Allegheny National Forest as part of a larger cultural resources survey of the Loleta Recreation Area. This project involved archaeological and architectural surveying of the sawmill town of Loleta which was located at the Loleta Recreation Area. This survey was conducted in the winter and spring of 1993 by Archaeological Services Consultants, Inc. for the Allegheny National Forest at their request. Large format photographs were contributed by photographer, Deborah L. Dobson-Brown.

Deborah Dobson-Brown
Historian
Archaeological Services Consultants, Inc.
4620 Indianola Avenue
Columbus, OH 43214

For documentation of the Loleta Recreation Area, please refer to HABS No. PA-5963.

Summary Description of Dam and Setting

Thirteen years after the mill operations ceased the land that had been the former site of Loleta was purchased by the USDA Forest Service. The mill pond attracted residents from nearby communities as a popular swimming hole. Local residents wanted the Forest Service to construct a safer dam.

The Civilian Conservation Corps was the combined effort of many government units to provide work for unemployed males during the Great Depression. CCC camps were spread across the country. It was devised to cope with national conservation needs as well as unemployment, a collective response to the worsening economic conditions of 1933 (Otis, et al 1986:1).

On January 20, 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt became President of the United States amidst the Great Depression. Millions of Americans suffered from unemployment. In 1933, unemployment affected over twenty-five percent of the nation's work force, as opposed to little over three percent in 1929 (Paige 1985:2). In his first 100 days in office, President Roosevelt initiated several programs to stimulate the country's economy and work force. The most popular program created under the New Deal was the Civilian Conservation Corps. The Civilian Conservation Corps was "to be used in simple work, not interfering with normal employment, and confining itself to forestry, the prevention of soil erosion, flood control, and similar projects" (Cohen 1980:6). Congress acted on Roosevelts' legislation and on March 31, 1933 created an Act for the Relief of Unemployment Through The Performance of Useful Public Work. Roosevelt named Robert Fechner as director of the Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) but the name Civilian Conservation Corps used by Roosevelt remained. The Civilian Conservation Corps did not officially exist until Congress changed the agency's name in June of 1937 (Forrey 1984:25; O'Bannon 1986).

The Departments of Labor, War, Interior and Agriculture worked together to organize the new agency. The Department of Labor recruited the men; clothing was provided by the Army which also managed the camps. Control of the work accomplished by the CCC was done under the direction of the Department of Interior's National Park Service and the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service (Otis, et al 1986).

The CCC's accomplishments in the conservation of natural resources overshadows its success as a relief agency. The Corps' primary purpose was the conservation of the nation's soil and forests. Approximately seventy-five percent of all CCC camps engaged in this type of work, and half of these worked at protecting and improving forest resources (Salmond 1967:121; O'Bannon 1986). These tasks included structural improvement, transportation, erosion control, flood control, forest culture, forest protection, landscape and recreation, range, wildlife and miscellaneous emergency work (Merrill 1981:9).

The CCC's construction of recreational facilities represented the New Deals' ideals regarding mans coexistence with nature. The majority of the CCC's structures are examples of rustic architecture which calls for the use of natural materials, extensive handwork and resembling the American log cabin. The log construction, high quality masonry work and specialized materials such as wane-edged siding and hand-forged hardware are evidence of the CCC's skills. Many of the CCC's structures have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. To this date rustic architecture symbolizes the nation's state and national parks (O'Bannon 1986).

The Civilian Conservation Corps was divided into nine regions around the country. Region 7 contained the following states: Connecticut, Delaware, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and West Virginia. Seven of these states had national forest lands, Pennsylvania being one of them. Approximately twenty percent of the CCC's work in the region was performed on its national forests. About seven percent of the country's CCC work on national forests was done in Region 7. The CCC was also put to work cleaning up damaged areas and constructing control devices for flooding in Pennsylvania in 1936. The CCC helped clear trails, build bridges and shelters for hikers,

most notable for the Appalachian Trail which passed through Pennsylvania (Otis et al 1986:55-56). Other work accomplished by the CCC's in Pennsylvania included impounding large diversion dams (102), building truck trails and minor roads (3,273 miles), planting trees and reforestation (59,806,000), controlling tree and plant diseases (406,059 acres), creating fish breeding ponds (1,698) and improving the forest stand (201,468 acres)(Merrill 1981:168).

The CCC construction works have been divided into five broad categories based on function: CCC camps, organized group camps, family cabins, day use facilities, and maintenance areas (O'Bannon and Henry 1986). The Loleta Recreation Area is an example of a day use facility. The presence of a small, man-made lake is typical of larger day use areas. The Loleta Recreation Area facility includes a dam, a bath house, and three picnic shelters built by CCC workers and a tool shed which dates to the CCC era. Other structures found at large, day use areas built by the CCC can include latrines and concession stands. The CCC also built fire places, hiking trails, and bridges and added utility (water, sewer, and electric) systems to some facilities.

Although the CCC did have standard building plans, variations did exist between many of the constructions. Picnic shelters exhibit variations in size, support column material (unhewn stone or logs), and the presence or absence of extra features such as fireplaces, fixed tables, or railing between columns. The shelter roof is pyramid shaped. Dams were built in keeping with the rustic architecture feeling and acsthetic values of harmony with neutral surrounding. The actual construction may vary, but the visible part of a dam is faced with rough cut stone. Variations in design can also occur on other CCC constructions such as bath houses and park offices, both of which are found at the Loleta Recreation Area.

In 1933, work began at the Loleta Recreation Area for the Allegheny National Forest by the CCC camp located near Marienville (Michael Schultz, Historian). On June 26, 1935 Company 2329 was established in a tent camp near the Big Salmon Bridge in the Allegheny National Forest approximately four miles from Marienville. In September, 1935 the company abandoned the tent camp and moved into barracks constructed one mile closer to Marienville. In May of 1936, projects included the improvement of the Loleta Forest Camp located six miles southeast of Marienville. Land was cleared for campsites, trails forged, phone lines installed, stationing of lifeguards at the swimming pond and landscaping were conducted. A hand built dam eight feet in height was erected out of stone as well as picnic shelters and a bath house, which was located on the site of the steam engine house (NACCCA files).

Located on the Millstone Creek where the sawmill town of Loleta once stood, thc lower dam crosses the creek slowing the flow of water to create a calm stream suitable for wading. The dam is visible upon entering the day use area and serves as a focal point. The lower dam is situated downriver from the upper dam. The area between the two dams serves as a swimming pond for both day use and overnight campers. The high water level is necessary to reduce the flow of water over the two dams and to allow for adequate depth for swimming. A foot bridge, positioned east of the lower dam offers the visitor a wide angled view of the entire dam. The flagstone surface on the crest and the cut limestone apron give the lowcr dam a "natural" appearance to the recreation area which is the trademark of the CCC construction built dams.

The dam is located next to the bathhouse and is the second of two dams spanning Millstone Creek. The dam is divided in two halves by a masonry pier which houses the sluice. The masonry pier measures 10'2"x10' square and is 6' tall. The pier is constructed out 1'9"x1" block limestone and is set with 1" mortar. The sluice pipe is 3'8". The east side of the sluice exposes the pipe which leads to a concrete channel for water flow. The west side of the masonry pier displays the sluice gate which measures 4'11.5" and is constructed out of metal set in a grid pattern. The top of the gate has a 5'6" bronze stem which controls the movement of the gate. This gate is manually operated. The sluice gate rests on a concrete base when closed. The crest span of the dam cap measures 48'2" on the south and 48'1" on the north with the masonry pier dividing the two halves. The cap is constructed of a concrete core with a paved cap and a flagstone surface. This flagstone surface assists in

dissipating the water energy. The northern apron of the dam measures 44'8"x6'4". with twelve 2" diameter weep holes cut within the concrete spaced 4'6" apart. The southern apron of the dam measures 44'4"x6'3" with eleven 2" diameter weep holes cut within the concrete spaced 4'6" apart. These weep holes are cut in the apron to dissipate the water energy coming over the dam. At the base of the apron is a limestone block apron which was placed to also dissipate the water energy. These blocks measure from 2'3"x1'8" down to 11" in diameter. The blocks have drill bit cuttings which also assist in the reduction of water energy. On both the south and north sides of the dam, masonry walls have been constructed out of concrete, limestone block and mortar. These walls serve as retaining walls as well as support bases for the dam. The support bases measure at 11'9"x13'6". The limestone blocks measure 1'4"x5" and are rectangular in shape. There is 1" of mortar between the block. The south bank wall has two 2" pipe holes set 1'5" apart. These holes are set parallel to two pipe holes on the masonry pier. The function of these holes is unknown as they are not indicated on the original drawings. An extension of these retaining walls was constructed years after the dam was completed. This gabeon is rock supported by metal meshing and serves to prevent soil erosion into the creek.

Sources of Information:

A. Historic Photographs: Photographs of the Loleta Recreation Area HABS No. PA-5963 show several views of the lower dam during construction of the recreation area. Photographs with the Loleta Recreation Area - Upper Dam (HAER PA-279-A) show the retaining walls and swimming pond between the two dams. Additional historic photographs accompany the lower dam documentation and show the construction of the dam. All of these original photographs are in the possession of the United States Department of Agriculture - Forest Service - Allegheny National Forest Supervisors Office in Warren, Pennsylvania.

B. Engineering Drawings: The only extant drawings of the Lower Dam, dated August 7, 1933 and signed by the USDA Forest Service, Region 7; dated February 24, 1934 and signed by Paul V. Wakefield; drawing for the sluice gate dated May, 19?? and signed by the USDA Forest Service; and an undated survey data drawing signed by the Allegheny National Forest. These drawings are kept on file at the Allegheny National Forest Supervisors Office in Warren, Pennsylvania. Photographic copies of these drawings are included with this report.

C. Bibliography:

Cohen, Stan
1980 The Tree Army: A Pictorial History of the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942. Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, Missoula, Montana.

Forrey, William C.
1984 History of Pennsylvania's State Parks. Department of Environmental Resources, Harrisburg, PA.

Hill, Edwin G.
1990 In the Shadow of the Mountain, The Spirit of the CCC. Washington State University Press, Pullman, Washington.

Lacy, Leslie Alexander
1976 The Soil Soldiers, The Civilian Conservation Corps in the Great Depression. Chilton Book Company, Radnor, Pennsylvania.

Merrill, Perry H.
1981 Roosevelt's Forest Army, a History of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Perry H. Merrill, Montpelier, Vermont.

Miller, Terence
1987 *Historical Interpretive Plan for Loleta Recreation Area*. Interpreting the Former Logging Town of Loleta, Pennsylvania, Allegheny National Forest, Warren, Pennsylvania.

National Association of Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni 2329 Files, St. Louis, Missouri.

O'Bannon, Patrick W., and William R. Henry
1986 Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) Architecture in Pennsylvania State Parks: 1933-1942, Thematic Resources, National Register of Historic Inventory-Nomination Form.

Otis, Alison T., William D. Honey, Thomas C. Hogg, and Kimberly K. Lakin
1986 The Forest Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps: 1933-1942. United States Department of Agricultural, Forest Service.

Paige, John C.
1933-42 An Administrative History. National Park Service, Washington.

1985 The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service.

Salmond, John A.
1967 The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942: A New Deal Case Study. Duke University Press, Durhan, North Carolina.

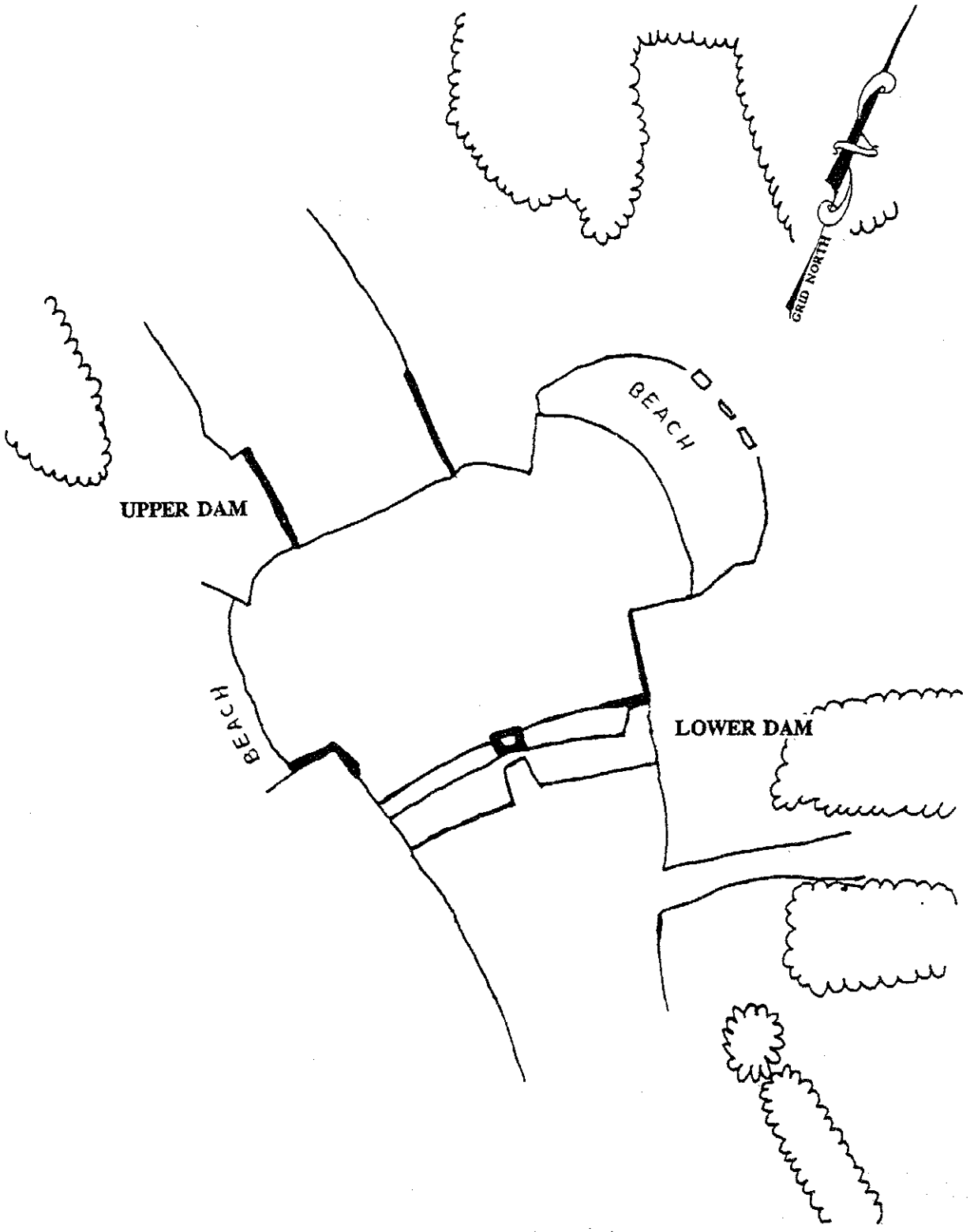
Schultz, Michael J.
1993 Oral interview recorded on audio tape dated January 18, 1993.

United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service 1993 Allegheny National Forest Supervisors Office Cultural Resouree Files

D. Sources Checked But Information Not Located:

Elk County Historical Society; Forest County Historical Society; Marienville Public Library, Warren Public Library, Elk County Register of Deeds Office; Elk County Recorders Office.

Other reports in the HAER collection completed for this project include: an overview history of the Loleta Recreation Area, Upper Dam (PA-279-A). Other reports in the HABS collection completed for this project include: an overview history of the Loleta Recreation Area (PA-5963), a short form of the Loleta Recreation Area, Bath House (PA-5963-A), a short form of the Loleta Recreation Area, Picnic Pavilion (PA-5963-B) and a short form of the Loleta Recreation Area, Office Building (PA-5963-C). These reports are incorporated in the prepared report A Cultural Resource Examination Of The Loleta Recreation Area, Millstone Township, Elk County, Pennsylvania by Lori Frye, Deborah Dobson-Brown, Herb Beamer and Robert Corso for Archaeological Services Consultants, Inc., submitted to the United States Department of Agriculture, Allegheny National Forest, 1993.


GRID NORTH
BEACH
UPPER DAM
BEACH
LOWER DAM